

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY EUR/EE:RAMOSHER/CWSCHMIDT:TL
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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, CGEN, PFOR, BU (MAREVA,RUMYANKA AND YORDANKA)

SUBJECT: DIVIDED FAMILIES: MAREV CASE - NEXT STEPS?

REFERENCE: (A) STATE 081295; (B) SOFIA 699; (C)STATE 73112

1. ACTING EUR/EE DIRECTOR (SCHMIDT) AND BULGARIAN DESK OFFICER MET WITH MAREVS APRIL 6 FOR ONE-AND-HALF HOURS. SCHMIDT BEGAN BY EMPHASIZING THAT DECISION AS TO WHETHER MRS. MAREV MADE VISIT TO BULGARIA WAS ENTIRELY HERS TO MAKE, BUT THAT DEPARTMENT WANTED TO MAKE CLEAR TO MAREVS THE GUARANTEES THAT WE WOULD FIRST SEEK FROM THE GOB, THE PRECAUTIONS OUR EMBASSY WAS PREPARED TO TAKE TO PROTECT MRS. MAREV WHILE IN BULGARIA TO MINIMIZE ANY RISK INVOLVED, AND THAT WE BELIEVED THIS COURSE TO BE OUR BEST OPPORTUNITY FOR BRINGING CASE TO PROMPT AND FAVORABLE RESOLUTION.

2. DRAWING ON REFS B AND C, SCHMIDT THEN OUTLINED IN DETAIL THE PROPOSED ARRANGEMENTS AND SAFEGUARDS. (ALTHOUGH WE HAD EARLIER INDICATED TO MAREVS INFORMALLY THAT IT CONFIDENTIAL

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APPEARED GOB MIGHT BE WILLING TO PERMIT MRS. MAREV TO RETURN TO BULGARIA TO MEET WITH HER DAUGHTERS, OUR MEETING ON APRIL 6 WAS FIRST TIME WE HAD LAID OUT THE ENTIRE

PROPOSAL TO THEM IN AN EFFORT TO OBTAIN THEIR REACTION.) THE RESPONSE OF THE MAREVS WAS, BOTH INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY, HIGHLY SKEPTICAL TO SAY THE LEAST. THEY APPEARED CONVINCED THAT THE BULGARIAN AUTHORITIES WOULD SOMEHOW FIND A WAY TO PREVENT MRS. MAREV FROM LEAVING BULGARIA ONCE SHE RETURNED. AT ONE POINT MR. MAREV

DESCRIBED THE ENTIRE ARRANGEMENT AS A "BIG PIT WITH A LITTLE GRASS OVER THE TOP". DESPITE OUR ATTEMPT TO EXPLAIN THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AMBASSADOR'S INVITATION FOR MRS. MAREV TO STAY AT THE RESIDENCE AND OF THE EMBASSY'S PLAN TO PROVIDE A BULGARIAN-SPEAKING ESCORT OFFICER, THE MAREVS SEEMED TO REMAIN CONVINCED THAT NONE OF THESE MEASURES WOULD PROVIDE ANY REAL PROTECTION. THEY FEARED, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT BEFORE THE EMBASSY COULD EVEN MAKE CONTACT WITH MRS. MAREV AT THE AIRPORT SHE WOULD BE TAKEN AWAY BY BULGARIAN AUTHORITIES.

3. WITH RESPECT TO TRAVEL DOCUMENTATION, WE NOTED THAT THE USG WOULD INSIST THAT MRS. MAREV TRAVEL ON AN AMERICAN PASSPORT BECAUSE OF OUR POSITION THAT SHE IS SOLELY AN AMERICAN CITIZEN UNDER THE 1933 TREATY OF NATURALIZATION. WE ENCOURAGED HER TO MAKE THIS CLEAR WITH KONSTANTINOV DURING HER MEETING WITH HIM. (NOTE: IT HAS BEEN CLEAR TO US FROM PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS OF HER POSSIBLE TRAVEL TO BULGARIA THAT MRS. MAREV HAD NO INTENTION OF TRAVELING ON ANYTHING OTHER THAN A U.S. PASSPORT. HOWEVER, QUESTION WAS NEVER DIRECTLY PUT TO HER UNTIL NOW.)

4. MAREVS EXPRESSED STRONG SKEPTICISM OF BULGARIAN "GUARANTEES" AND "ASSURANCES", AND QUESTIONED THEIR MOTIVES. AT ONE POINT, MR. MAREV SUGGESTED THAT BUL-
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GARIANS SIMPLY WANTED HIM TO USE UP HIS MONEY. WE ATTEMPTED TO EXPLAIN WHY BULGARIANS MIGHT NOW, IN RESPONSE TO EFFORTS USG HAD BEEN MAKING IN THEIR BEHALF AND TO THE "SPOTLIGHT" OF CSCE, BE MORE INCLINED TO LET THEIR CHILDREN GO, ALTHOUGH NOT ON MAREV'S TERMS. WE ALSO SPELLED OUT EXTREME UNLIKELIHOOD OF GOB NOT LIVING UP TO THEIR GUARANTEE AND ASSURANCES IN TERMS OF OVERALL RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. AND DAMAGING IMPACT ANY ACTION TO CONTRARY WOULD HAVE. MR. MAREV, WHILE WE TRUST RECOGNIZING IMPOSSIBILITY, NOTED THAT BETTER GUARANTEE WOULD BE FOR HIM TO HOLD A BULGARIAN EMBASSY OFFICER HERE UNTIL MRS. MAREV SAFELY RETURNED FROM HER VISIT TO BULGARIA. AT OTHER POINTS IN DISCUSSION, MAREVS URGED THAT GOB EITHER BRING CHILDREN TO BULGARIAN BORDER OR TO ANOTHER COUNTRY WHERE THE FACE-TO-FACE MEETING WITH MRS. MAREV COULD TAKE PLACE.

5. (DEPARTMENT WAS AWARE THAT DURING RECENT WEEKS MAREVS CALLED ON OFFICES OF INTERESTED SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN AND TOLD THEM THAT DEPARTMENT WAS "PRESSURING" MRS. MAREV TO RETURN TO BULGARIA FROM WHERE SHE WOULD CERTAINLY NEVER BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE. EUR/EE OFFICER WAS ABLE TO QUICKLY CLARIFY MATTER WHEN THESE OFFICES ASKED FOR AN EXPLANATION. IN EACH CASE THE SENATOR OR CONGRESSMAN'S

STAFF PROMISED TO REPORT CORRECT SITUATION TO MAREVS AND TO URGE THEM TO SERIOUSLY CONSIDER PROPOSAL. UNFORTUNATELY, ONE AIDE IN SENATOR JACKSON'S OFFICE OVERZEALOUSLY TRIED TO ALLAY MAREVS FEARS AND DEMONSTRATE USG'S INFLUENCE BY RECOUNTING TALE OF ROMANIAN WOMAN WHO RETURNED TO ROMANIA TO BRING OUT HER 18-YEAR OLD DAUGHTER AND WAS SUBSEQUENTLY HELD BY GOR FOR FIVE MONTHS. ACCORDING TO THE STORY, SHE WAS FINALLY RELEASED ON URGING OF USG AND EXPELLED FROM THE COUNTRY, WITH HER DAUGHTER FOLLOWING SHORTLY. MAREVS, HOWEVER, FOCUSED ON SEIZURE RATHER THAN ON FACT THAT US EMBASSY WAS ABLE TO OBTAIN HER RELEASE AFTER FIVE MONTHS. WE HAVE NO IDEA WHERE STAFFER
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GOT THIS STORY FROM, WHICH IS UNKNOWN TO US. WE ARE PURSUING THE QUESTION.)

6. IN ADDITION TO FEAR THAT MRS. MAREV WOULD BE DETAINED, MAREVS ALSO INDICATED DURING OUR MEETING THAT THEY ARE NOT CERTAIN THEIR DAUGHTERS WOULD BE WILLING TO STATE IN A FACE-TO-FACE MEETING WITH THEIR MOTHER THAT THEY WANT TO JOIN THEIR PARENTS IN THE US. NOTING THEIR MOST RECENT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH THEIR DAUGHTERS, WHICH TOOK PLACE ROUGHLY SIX WEEKS AGO, THEY APPEAR TO BELIEVE THAT THE BULGARIAN AUTHORITIES MIGHT FRIGHTEN THE CHILDREN INTO SAYING THAT THEY DO NOT WISH TO LEAVE. DURING THE TELEPHONE CONVERSATION, MRS. MAREV RECOUNTED, DAUGHTERS SAID THAT "SOME MEN" HAD TOLD THEM THEY COULD NOT LEAVE AND THAT THEIR PARENTS MUST RETURN TO BULGARIA. THE TELEPHONE CONNECTION WAS INTERRUPTED SEVERAL TIMES AND FINALLY DISCONNECTED; MAREVS ARE CERTAIN LINE WAS TAPPED. NEVERTHELESS, THE MAREVS ARE CERTAIN THAT THEIR DAUGHTERS IN FACT WANT NOTHING MORE THAN TO BE ABLE TO LEAVE BULGARIA AND JOIN THEIR PARENTS. THEY BASE THIS VIEW ON THEIR TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS WITH DAUGHTERS AND A LETTER RECEIVED IN 1974 FROM ONE DAUGHTER WHICH DESCRIBED BEATINGS AND DEPRIVATIONS THEY HAD SUFFERED. IN LIGHT OF THOSE CONDITIONS, MRS. MAREV ASKS, HOW COULD DAUGHTERS NOT WANT TO LEAVE.

7. IN RESPONSE TO OUR QUESTIONS, MAREVS DENIED HAVING ANY OUTSTANDING DEBTS, FINES, RENT AND THE LIKE IN BULGARIA, AND ALSO SAID THEY WERE NOT AWARE OF ANY CHARGES

OUTSTANDING AGAINST THEM WHICH WOULD GIVE GOB PRETEXT OF HOLDING MRS. MAREV.

8. AT CONCLUSION OF MEETING, ALTHOUGH MAREVS WERE STRONGLY INCLINED TO REJECT IDEA OF MRS. MAREV'S TRIP, ON OUR REQUEST THEY AGREED TO CONSIDER THE PROPOSAL
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FURTHER AND FOR MRS. MAREV TO MEET WITH KONSTANTINOV BEFORE MAKING A FINAL DECISION.

9. DURING OUR MEETING, MR. MAREV ASKED WHY BULGARIANS DID NOT WANT TO TALK TO HIM. WE TOLD HIM OF KONSTANTINOV'S EARLIER STATEMENT THAT HE WAS "TOO MUCH INVOLVED" IN PROBLEM, AND ALSO REPEATED BULGARIAN CHARGES THAT HE HAD FORCED MRS. MAREV TO LEAVE HER CHILDREN AND BULGARIA AGAINST HER WILL AND THAT HE CONTINUED TO HOLD HER FORCIBLY. IT WAS POSSIBLE, WE SAID, THAT BULGARIAN AUTHORITIES MAY BELIEVE MRS. MAREV WILL RETURN TO BULGARIA AND REMAIN THERE IF ONLY GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY. BOTH MAREVS EXPRESSED AMUSEMENT AT THIS SUGGESTION AND ACKNOWLEDGED THAT STORY HAD SOME LIMITED BASIS IN FACT. AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED BY DEPARTMENT, MAREV ADMITTED THAT HE HAD HAD TO PHYSICALLY RESTRAIN HIS WIFE FROM GOING BACK TO BULGARIA WHEN THEY FIRST ARRIVED IN ISTANBUL AND SHE LEARNED OF HIS DECISION NOT TO RETURN. THEY BOTH POINTED OUT TO US THAT SHE HAD HAD NUMEROUS OPPORTUNITIES TO RETURN SINCE THEN AND COULD HAVE LEFT AT ANY TIME, HAD SHE WISHED TO DO SO.

10. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ARMITAGE TOOK ADVANTAGE OF HIS APRIL 7 MEETING (SEE STATE 079935) WITH AMBASSADOR POPOV TO RAISE MAREV CASE WITH HIM. ARMITAGE NOTED REPORT OF MAY 20 COURT HEARING IN VARNA AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THIS WAS NOT GOING TO PRODUCE AN ADDITIONAL OBSTACLE TO RESOLVING CASE. POPOV WAFFLED IN ANSWERING AND REFERED TO BULGARIAN LAW AND LEGAL PROCEDURES TO DEAL WITH ABANDONED CHILDREN. POPOV THEN NOTED THAT MRS. MAREV HAD MET WITH KONSTANTINOV THAT MORNING. AMBASSADOR ADMITTED HAVING ONLY HAD A BRIEF DISCUSSION OF MEETING WITH KONSTANTINOV, BUT HE UNDERSTOOD THAT MRS. MAREV HAD EXPRESSED RELUCTANCE TO GO TO BULGARIA. NEVERTHELESS, SHE HAD AGREED TO CONSIDER IDEA FURTHER AND WOULD REPLY NO LATER THAN APRIL 11. IN RESPONSE TO CONFIDENTIAL

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ARMITAGE'S QUESTION, POPOV STATED FLATLY, THAT THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEM WITH MRS. MAREV GOING TO BULGARIA ON A U.S. PASSPORT WITH A BULGARIAN VISA. HE SAID HE HOPED THAT MRS. MAREV UNDERSTOOD THAT WITH A US PASSPORT AND A BULGARIAN VISA SHE WOULD HAVE FULL PROTECTION OF OUR CONSULAR CONVENTION. RE PARA 9 ABOVE, POPOV MADE

SEVERAL COMMENTS DURING HIS MEETING WITH ARMITAGE AND AFTERWARDS ON WAY TO HIS CAR THAT STRENGTHENED OUR VIEW THAT GOB STILL BELIEVES MRS. MAREV MIGHT VOLUNTARILY REMAIN IN BULGARIA.

11. KONSTANTINOV TOLD US THAT MRS. MAREV HAD TOLD HIM DURING THEIR APRIL 7 MEETING THAT SHE WOULD NOT GO ON A BULGARIAN PASSPORT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, AND THAT HE THEREFORE INFORMED HER THE EMBASSY WOULD ISSUE BULGARIAN VISA TO HER AND GUARANTEE HER SAFE RETURN. THE VISA COULD BE ISSUED WITHIN A MATTER OF ONE OR TWO DAYS. KONSTANTINOV SAID THEY HAD HAD "A VERY QUIET CONVERSATION" BUT THAT SHE STILL HAD FEARS ABOUT RETURNING. HE ALSO TOLD US THAT THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEMS FOR MRS. MAREV IN BULGARIA. HE SAID SHE HAD NOT VIOLATED ANY LAWS OTHER THAN THE PASSPORT LAW, AND HIS AUTHORITIES HAD SAID THEY WOULD NOT TAKE ANY MEASURES AGAINST HER FOR VIOLATION OF THE PASSPORT LAW.

12. ON APRIL 8 ACTING EUR/EE DIRECTOR (SCHMIDT) MET WITH MAREVS AGAIN. MRS. MAREV GAVE AN ACCOUNT OF HER MEETING ON PRECEDING DAY WITH KONSTANTINOV WHICH, IN ADDITION TO WHAT KONSTANTINOV HAD TOLD US, FOCUSED ON MRS. MAREV'S UNANSWERED QUESTIONS. KONSTANTINOV HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO EXPLAIN WHY HE HAD NOT ANSWERED THE MAREVS' EARLIER LETTERS TO THE EMBASSY AND WHY THE CHILDREN'S LETTERS TO THEM NOW APPEARED TO BE INTERCEPTED IN BULGARIA. (BY PHONE, THE CHILDREN SAID THEIR RECENT LETTERS HAD BEEN RETURNED FROM CHICAGO, WHICH THE MAREVS CONFIDENTIAL

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STRONGLY DOUBT.) IN FACT, MRS. MAREV SAID, KONSTANTINOV AT TIMES DIDN'T EVEN SEEM TO BE LISTENING TO HER. MAREVS SAID THEY WOULD INFORM KONSTANTINOV ON APRIL 11 THAT MRS. MAREV WOULD NOT MAKE THE TRIP TO BULGARIA. SCHMIDT SAID USG WOULD CONTINUE TO PRESS GOB FOR RELEASE OF CHILDREN, BUT THAT HE GREATLY REGRETTED THEIR DECISION SINCE VISIT SEEMED TO OFFER BEST PROSPECT OF GAINING THE CHILDREN. OF COURSE, HE SAID, IT WAS MAREV'S DECISION TO MAKE.

13. ON APRIL 11 WE LEARNED FROM KONSTANTINOV THAT MRS. MAREV HAD INFORMED HIM THAT SHE DID NOT WISH TO GO. KONSTANTINOV SAID HE HAD REPORTED THIS TO SOFIA AND THAT DECISION WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE THERE REGARDING WHAT TO DO. HE ADDED THAT HE REGRETTED SHE HAD REJECTED THE PROPOSAL.

14. IT SEEMS TO US THAT JUST AS KONSTANTINOV MAY NOT HAVE BEEN LISTENING TO ALL OF MRS. MAREV'S PLEAS, MAREVS

ALSO WERE NOT REALLY LISTENING TO MUCH OF DEPARTMENT'S APPROACH TO THEM. WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY THOUGHTS EMBASSY MAY NOW HAVE FOR NEXT STEPS. WE BELIEVE WE HAVE DETECTED STRONG DESIRE ON AMBASSADOR POPOV'S PART TO HAVE MADAME ZHIVKOVA VISIT COME OFF SUCCESSFULLY. DOES EMBASSY SEE SAME DESIRE IN MFA, AND IF SO, COULD

THIS POSSIBLY PROVIDE US WITH LEVERAGE? POPOV, BY
WAY, DID ASK ARMITAGE ONLY HALF JOKINGLY ON APRIL 7
THAT THERE BE NO "LINKAGE" BETWEEN HER VISIT AND MAREVS.

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